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PROBLEMS IN IMPLEMENTING THE ARMY'S CAPSTONE PROGRAM TO PROVIDE--ETC(U)
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UNITED STATES GENERAL ACCOUNTING OFFICE
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20548

FEDERAL PERSONNEL AND
COMPENSATION DIVISION

B-208816

SEPTEMBER 22, 1982

The Honorable John O. Marsh, Jr.
The Secretary of the Army

Attention: The Inspector General DAIG-AI

Dear Mr. Secretary:

Subject: Problems in Implementing the Army's CAPSTONE
Program to Provide All Reserve Components With
a Wartime Mission (GAO/FPCD-82-59) ✓

The Army's CAPSTONE program is designed to align all Army Reserve component units--Army National Guard and Army Reserves--under gaining-commands (those commands which will employ Reserve units in wartime) and provide units with detailed information concerning their wartime mission. This information is to be used to improve wartime planning and ongoing training for Reserve component units. However, implementation of CAPSTONE is behind schedule, and some units have not received information that could affect the type of training that is conducted.

At the outset, CAPSTONE concentrated on the North Atlantic Treaty Organization-Warsaw Pact scenario and was later expanded to cover the Rapid Deployment Force Army and Korean scenarios. War plans and standing operating procedures are to be developed initially by the gaining-commands and provided to appropriate, aligned Reserve units so that such units can develop complementary war plans and related training requirements.

Although the Army has taken steps recently to improve CAPSTONE management, the present management system does not provide the authorities in Europe and the Continental United States with the information needed to properly manage the program and to determine whether implementation is progressing satisfactorily. The present system has obscured the fact that many units had not been contacted by their gaining-commands, and some units had not received the required training and planning guidance. Improving the management system so that implementation progress can be properly monitored and corrective actions can be promptly taken is

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problems arise is essential to assure that training is properly focused. Otherwise, Reserve component units may be wasting valuable training time.

OBJECTIVE, SCOPE, AND METHODOLOGY

The objective of our study was to determine whether, as a result of CAPSTONE, Reserve components are focusing unit training on their specific wartime mission as it relates to the NATO-Warsaw Pact scenario. (At the time of our review, the program had not expanded to include other scenarios.) To accomplish this, we (1) reviewed the Army's management system for monitoring and coordinating the program and (2) visited the following seven Reserve units to determine how CAPSTONE had affected their training programs:

- 26th Infantry Division; Massachusetts Army National Guard; Boston, Massachusetts.
- 187th Separate Infantry Brigade; U.S. Army Reserve; Ft. Devens, Massachusetts.
- 1st Battalion; 102d Field Artillery Unit; Army National Guard; Salem, Massachusetts.
- 329th Engineer Group; U.S. Army Reserve; Brockton, Massachusetts.
- 1169th Army Transportation Terminal Unit; U.S. Army Reserve; Boston, Massachusetts.
- 804th Hospital Center; U.S. Army Reserve; Bedford, Massachusetts.
- 324th Data Processing Unit; U.S. Army Reserve; Bedford, Massachusetts.

We selected these units because they provided broad coverage of several different activities. At these units, we determined the status of CAPSTONE implementation and obtained available training and planning guidance. We reviewed the relationship of units' training to their wartime mission by discussing activities with personnel responsible for training and by reviewing training plans, personnel strength reports, and equipment status reports.

In reviewing the Army's management system for monitoring and coordinating CAPSTONE, we reviewed documentation establishing (1) organizational authorities and responsibilities and (2) CAPSTONE implementation schedules. We also reviewed available summary reports and correspondence pertaining to the extent to which the program has been implemented.

We held discussions with officials at the U.S. Army Forces Command (FORSCOM); the three Continental U.S. Armies; V Corps, Europe; and Headquarters, U.S. Army Europe (USAREUR) to gain a broad perspective of CAPSTONE's progress and problems. Our work, which was conducted between August 1981 and April 1982, was performed in accordance with our Office's current "Standards for Audit of Governmental Organizations, Programs, Activities, and Functions."

ORGANIZATIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES AND PURPOSE OF CAPSTONE

The Army's FORSCOM is the coordinating authority for the overall implementation of the CAPSTONE organizational structure. The Commander, FORSCOM, has delegated this authority to the Commanders of the three Continental U.S. Armies which are responsible for managing and operating subordinate readiness and mobilization regions within their geographical boundaries.

Under CAPSTONE, which was approved by the Army Chief of Staff in October 1979, all Reserve component units are to be aligned with an active or other Reserve unit with which they are to employ in wartime. In defining CAPSTONE, the Chief, National Guard Bureau, in a March 1982 testimony before the House Armed Services Subcommittee on Military Personnel and Compensation said:

"* * * the Army CAPSTONE program is designed to improve wartime planning and preparation through the organization and training of a force structure designed to meet a particular contingency mission."

CAPSTONE designates for each unit the wartime chain of command, probable wartime mission, and probable area of employment. Aligning the units with Active or other Reserve component units is aimed at improving planning and execution as well as identifying training for wartime requirements. Thus, soldiers who may fight together are to become involved in the peacetime planning and training for the wartime mission they must perform.

Joint training exercises are performed to foster training improvements and complement CAPSTONE. In this regard, during 1982, 108 Army National Guard units plan to participate in 2 weeks of intensive training with overseas commands. Also, if the Army Reserve's fiscal year 1983 budget is approved, overseas training for elements of 100 units will be planned.

FULL BENEFITS OF CAPSTONE NOT YET REALIZED

During hearings in 1981, the Army's Chief of Staff testified before the Congress that, under CAPSTONE, practically every Reserve component unit had a specific wartime assignment and was

working closely with an Active Force unit. Our review shows, however, that progress in implementing CAPSTONE has been slow and that many units still have not been contacted by their gaining-commands. In addition, some units had not received information that could affect the type of training that is conducted.

FORSCOM initially planned that CAPSTONE's alignments would be completed and fully operational by the end of fiscal year 1981. That goal has been revised and is presently targeted for September 1982. However, on the basis of the following information received (as of April 1982) from three of the nine readiness and mobilization regions, we doubt that these three regions will implement CAPSTONE on time.

Army readiness and mobilization regions

	<u>I</u>	<u>II</u>	<u>III</u>
	----- (Percent) -----		
Units contacted by the gaining-command	70	88	76
Units receiving war plans and/or standing operating procedures from gaining-command	a/10	a/74	(b)

a/Regions I and II were unable to identify the total number of units that should receive war plans and/or standing operating procedures. Accordingly, these percentages are based on the total number of units in each region.

b/Region III reported that, on the basis of the number units that would normally prepare war plans and standing operating procedures, 82 percent had not prepared war plans and 88 percent had not prepared standing operating procedures. A region official said that the units generally reported that they had not received enough guidance from their gaining-commands to be able to prepare these documents.

On August 17, 1982, region IV officials, located within the First Army, informed us that as of April 1, 1982, almost 100 percent of the units under their jurisdiction had been contacted by their gaining-command. The percent of units that had received planning and training guidance was imprecise, but officials estimated that about 75 percent had received it.

FORSCOM officials told us that CAPSTONE would not necessarily change a unit's mission or the type of training it would perform. They said, for example, that direct combat units such as artillery

At three units visited, however, little progress had been made in implementing the program. Unit officials were generally critical of the time it took to get mission information from wartime gaining-commands. Although CAPSTONE alignments were completed in mid-1980, the 804th Hospital Center was not even contacted by its gaining-command until May 1981. Because of the additional time taken to obtain the gaining-command's war plan and to complete its own war plan, the unit does not expect to complete revised training plans before the 1983 summer camp training period.

At the time of our visit, the 26th Infantry Division had not received any information on its wartime mission and did not know what was causing the delay. According to the training and operations officer, the Division's relationship with its wartime gaining-command has been practically nonexistent. Although lacking mission information, the 26th Infantry Division did receive training guidance from its gaining-command in March 1982. According to the training and operations officer, this guidance will be incorporated, to the extent possible, into 1982 training exercises. He said that training plans could not fully incorporate the guidance until 1983.

The 102d Field Artillery unit had neither received war plans nor specific mission information from its gaining-command. The unit commander indicated that he was aware of a general area of employment but lacked knowledge of a specific location. He said that, as a result, the training conducted is not based on a specific mission and that the unit's training would be more effective if it knew the specific employment location.

NEED FOR IMPROVED MANAGEMENT CONTROLS

The former Commanding General, FORSCOM, stated at a February 1981 Commander's conference that CAPSTONE is probably the single most important program the Army has adopted for a number of years. He noted that for it to succeed, gaining-commands must tell Reserve component units which tasks are critical so that the units can effectively use their limited training time.

However, there is no systematic monitoring system for assessing progress in implementing CAPSTONE. FORSCOM officials told us that they do not have a formal system for monitoring the program. FORSCOM does not require that units submit implementation status reports and does not know the extent to which Reserve component units are receiving the required training and planning guidance from gaining-commands. These officials also told us that they do not know what procedures the Continental U.S. Armies and the readiness and mobilization regions use to monitor CAPSTONE. FORSCOM officials, however, informed us that they monitor the

program informally through Inspector General reports, commander's conferences, letters of instruction from the Commander, and telephone conversations with the Army readiness and mobilization regions.

For the program to work, officials responsible for implementing CAPSTONE must, at the very least, know what problems are occurring in the program and must take action when problems are reported. When we asked officials at the 1st, 5th, and 6th Armies to provide us data on CAPSTONE implementation, they told us that they did not know the status of implementation because they did not require units to routinely report it.

Officials of the 1st Army did tell us that they had apprised FORSCOM that numerous units had complained about lack of contact from gaining-commands. At FORSCOM's request, 1st Army submitted in December 1981 a report listing 71 units that had not been contacted by gaining-commands located outside its geographical jurisdiction. In transmitting its report to FORSCOM, 1st Army commented that:

"* * * [CAPSTONE's] success, however, depends on a demonstrated interest by higher headquarters. When there is a failure to initiate contact, provide Standing Operating Procedures and War Plans, and establish a sustained relationship, all envisioned in the program, interest at the lower level lags and desired objectives are never attained."

Officials of the 1st Army said they understood that FORSCOM planned to follow up by contacting commands listed in the report and by urging them to provide the required guidance to their CAPSTONE units.

FORSCOM officials told us that they do not plan on contacting the gaining-commands disclosed in the 1st Army report, nor have they asked the other Continental U.S. Armies to submit similar reports. FORSCOM officials pointed to a letter of instruction issued to the major U.S. Army commands in December 1981 and stated that it constituted an adequate response to 1st Army concerns. This document, however, restates an already existing requirement that all commanders insure that their subordinate CAPSTONE units are contacted. Furthermore, FORSCOM prepared and distributed it before receiving the 1st Army report.

The 5th Army region also appears to be experiencing implementation problems. Officials of the 5th Army said that their visits to units showed that some had not been contacted or had not received training guidance from their gaining-commands.

The 6th Army's CAPSTONE representative told us that there are no plans to obtain CAPSTONE status information from units.

He said that CAPSTONE implementation is a unit responsibility, and, therefore, it is up to commanders to assure its timely implementation.

Of the nine Army readiness and mobilization regions, only 1st Army regions I, II, and III had information on implementation status within their respective regions. (See p. 4.) In each case, the reports used to gather the information were initiated by the regions themselves and did not result from a 1st Army requirement. Region officials said that they are not required to report the status information to 1st Army.

Readiness regions I and II have used the status information to send letters to other regions asking their assistance in getting gaining-commands to contact and provide mission information to units in regions I and II. Region I and II officials said they have not received similar requests, except from each other. Region III officials said the information they develop is primarily used to identify problems and to urge gaining-commands in the region to contact their subordinate units. Region IV officials said they were going to report status information to the 1st Army and other readiness regions voluntarily.

IMPROVEMENTS TO CAPSTONE IN EUROPE

Since CAPSTONE is based on meeting the anticipated requirements of a war in Europe, its successful implementation is obviously important to U.S. forces located there. Officials at Headquarters, USAREUR, and a subordinate major command--Headquarters, V Corps, Europe--told us that CAPSTONE is an important program. USAREUR Headquarters officials said that CAPSTONE is the single management tool they have to prepare for a smooth transition to wartime operations. They also believe it will provide a number of benefits for the Reserve components, including improved training programs.

USAREUR and V Corps officials told us that they hope to have CAPSTONE implemented by the end of fiscal year 1983. They said that the original goal for earlier implementation was too optimistic and they cited inadequate staffing levels as a major problem.

V Corps officials stated that, before November 1981, all planning for CAPSTONE was handled by three officers at USAREUR Headquarters and by part-time planners at major subcommands. USAREUR recognized the staffing problem and increased its staffing for CAPSTONE planning to include five additional positions at USAREUR Headquarters and two full-time positions in each of three major subcommands. USAREUR officials stated that in fiscal year 1983, they will complete their staffing by adding several more people to CAPSTONE.

The chief of the CAPSTONE office in USAREUR responsible for coordinating program implementation anticipates that whenever revisions are made to the European operating plan, there will probably be a 10-percent change in alignments. The office chief said he planned to recommend that USAREUR Headquarters issue a circular urging its commanders to analyze their units twice a year to verify that all units have been notified if their task organization has changed.

CONCLUSIONS

We share the view of the Army that CAPSTONE is important, both to the defense of this country and to the improvement of Reserve component training. Yet, because the goal for full implementation has been extended by 1 year and because the Army has done little to monitor progress, we believe that the Army needs to improve its management of the program. Unless the Army develops an information system that enables it to monitor progress and to correct problems as they are identified, CAPSTONE will not achieve its desired goals, and planning and training activities for the Reserve components will be less effective than they could be.

The additional staffing planned for CAPSTONE by USAREUR in fiscal year 1983 should help to assure that the program is properly coordinated with Reserve components. However, periodic revisions to the European operating plan are expected to change CAPSTONE alignments. We believe that this prospect emphasizes the need for an adequate information system and appropriate management attention.

RECOMMENDATIONS

We recommend that the Secretary of the Army:

- Develop and implement a reporting system that will provide information on the implementation status of CAPSTONE. FORSCOM and USAREUR should use this information to identify implementation problems and to correct them.
- Systematically monitor the overall implementation progress of the program and discuss its status when testifying in connection with congressional oversight hearings and appropriations requests.

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AGENCY COMMENTS

The Department of the Army agreed with our conclusions and recommendations and said that it will begin institutionalizing a reporting system that will provide current data on CAPSTONE's implementation status.

The Army pointed out that, although CAPSTONE aligns units under gaining-commands, it may not affect the training of certain types of units. At the Army's suggestion, we clarified this matter on pages 1 and 4 of the report. The Army also commented that the statistical data in the draft report (see p. 4 of this report) showing the status of implementation was not precise because not all units would be expected to receive war plans and/or standing operating procedures. We have revised this section of the report to show that the percentage of units in regions I and II receiving war plans and standing operating procedures are based on the total number of units in each of the regions, rather than the number of units expected to receive the plans and procedures.

The Army acknowledged that it needs to systematically monitor CAPSTONE and pointed out that it does actively monitor the program through various informal means. We have added, on page 6 information provided by the Army on its informal monitoring activities.

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As you know, section 236 of the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1970 requires the head of a Federal agency to submit a written statement on actions taken on our recommendations. This written statement must be submitted to the House Committee on Government Operations and the Senate Committee on Governmental Affairs not later than 60 days after the date of the report. A written statement must also be submitted to the House and Senate Committees on Appropriations with an agency's first request for appropriations made more than 60 days after the date of the report.

We are sending copies of this report to the Director, Office of Management and Budget; the Chairman, Subcommittees on Defense, House and Senate Committees on Appropriations; Chairman, Subcommittee on Manpower and Personnel, Senate Committee on Armed Services; Chairman, Subcommittee on Military Personnel and Compensation, House Committee on Armed Services; the Secretary of Defense; and other interested parties.

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We wish to acknowledge the courtesy and cooperation your staff extended to us during our review.

Sincerely yours,



Clifford I. Gould
Director

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